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C O N F I D E N T I A L BRASILIA 001225

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TAGS: PHUM PREL UN
SUBJECT: BRAZIL: UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY THIRD COMMITTEE 2008
HUMAN RIGHTS PRIORITIES

REF: A. SECSTATE 93981
 1B. SECSTATE 95334
 1C. 07 BRASILIA 2081

Classified By: POLITICAL COUNSELOR STEPHEN LISTON, REASONS 1.4 b and d

11. (C) Summary. Brazil will continue to prefer addressing human rights issues in the UN Human Rights Council, continues to oppose country-specific resolutions, will support the EU's Religious Tolerance resolution in lieu of a Defamation of Religion resolution, and did not give a response on no action resolutions. End summary.

12. (C) Poloff delivered demarche (refs A, B) to Marcel Biatto, deputy to the presidential foreign policy adviser, and Counselor Marcia Adorno, head of Human Rights office at the Ministry of Foreign Relations (MRE) separately on September 110. Adorno gave the official Brazilian reply.

Country Resolutions: "Not Effective"

13. (C) Adorno noted that Brazil prefers to address human rights issues in the UN Human Rights Council, not the Third Committee, and reiterated Brazil's policy of not supporting country specific resolutions. She said Brazil supports giving "more autonomy" to the HRC, and does not support the Third Committee "reevaluating and reopening" the work already done in the HRC. She said Brazil voted for Burma and DPRK country resolutions only because of the extreme situations there, but Brazil believes country resolutions are not effective. A more effective way to deal with human rights violators is to engage them as "partners" to get them to cooperate, which is why Brazil places great importance on the Universal Periodic Review, she said. She said it is unlikely Brazil would work with other governments in support of a country resolution on Zimbabwe. She did not say how Brazil would vote on country resolutions on Iran, DPRK, or Sudan, and expressed agreement with our position on Belarus. Adorno did not offer any substantive response on no action motions; last year Brazil told us that although it sometimes supports their use, the GOB would vote against no action votes in the UNGA Third committee (ref C).

Defamation of Religion

14. (C) Brazil opposes the Defamation of Religions resolution, and will support the EU's Religious Intolerance resolution, Adorno said. She noted that for Brazil, religious freedom is an individual, not community, right similar to freedom of expression and conscience, and all individuals have a right to express their views on religion. Adorno said Brazil most recently voted for the Defamation of Religions resolution because it included an amendment to renew the mandate of the Special Rapporteur on freedom of expression. Adorno added that Brazil would like to see the

UN Dialogue of Civilizations used to promote religious tolerance.

Prisoners of Conscience

15. (C) Brazil did not sign the Declaration on Prisoners of Conscience because the text was closed to any changes, and Brazil would not be able to sign it unless the text were reopened, Adorno said. She did not think Brazil would support any effort to highlight the Declaration.

SOBEL